

A  
H I N T  
TO THE  
ESTABLISHED CLERGY  
OF THE  
KINGDOM OF IRELAND;  
IN ANSWER TO  
TWO LETTERS

LATELY ADDRESSED TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND BENCH,  
BY A  
REFORMER HIGH IN OFFICE,  
AND WHICH CONTAINED A PLAN FOR THE ENTIRE SUB-  
VERSION OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENT.

THIS HINT IS RECOMMENDED TO THE SERIOUS  
ATTENTION OF THE CLERGY AND LAITY.

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BY CLERICUS.

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*Audendum est aliquid universis, aut omnia singulis putianda.  
In eo ubi praesidium esse oportebat, ibi exitium est.*

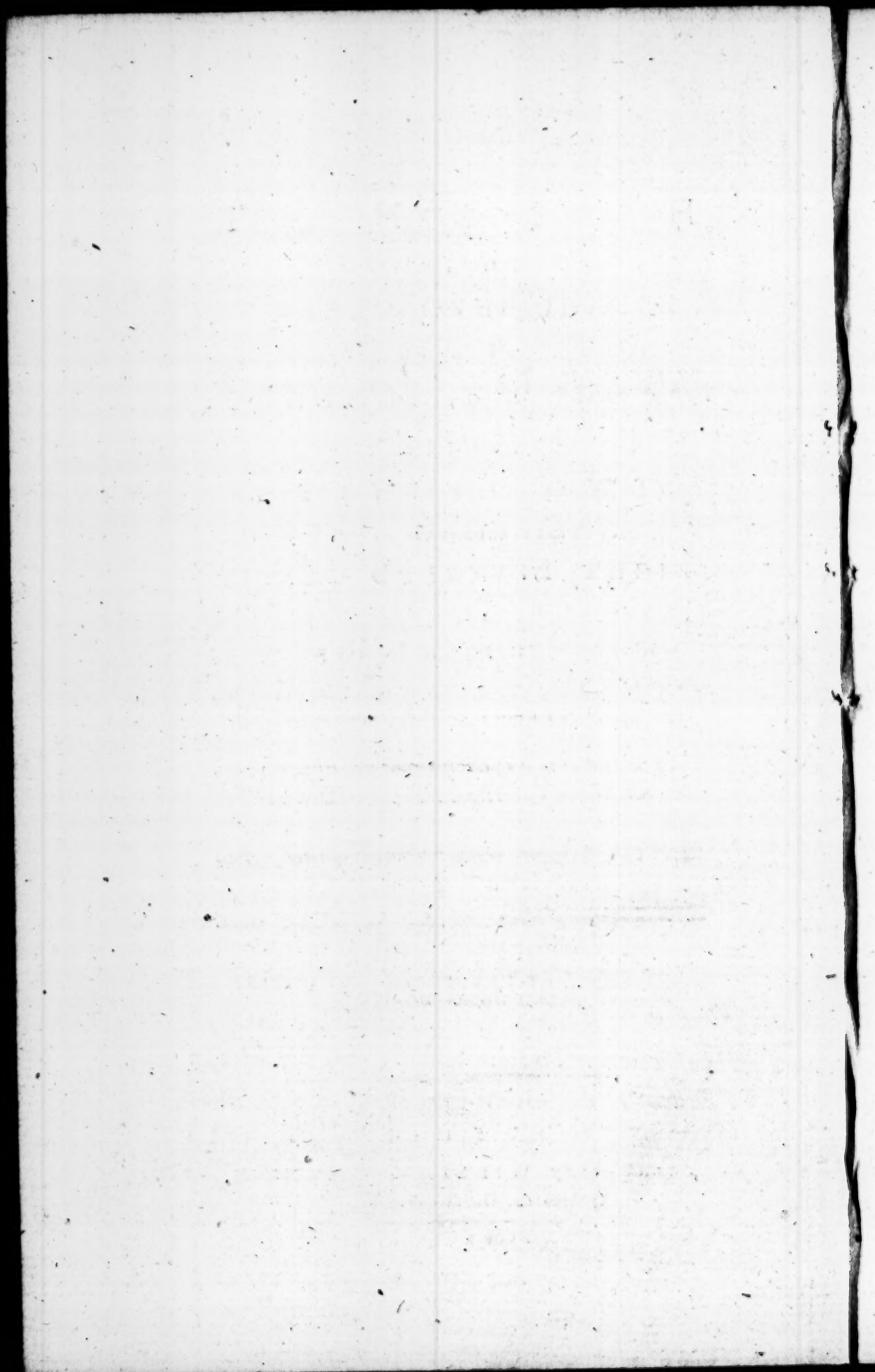
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M.DCC.LXXXVIII.



A  
H I N T  
TO THE  
ESTABLISHED CLERGY  
OF THE  
KINGDOM OF IRELAND,

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THE subject upon which I am about to treat is of such infinite consequence to the established clergy of the kingdom of Ireland, that I cannot but lament, from so learned and respectable a body, no one individual has stepped forth in defence of that great branch of the constitution. An easy indolence is a prevail-

ing feature in the character of my reverend brethren, which renders them blind to their own welfare, and open to the attacks of their numerous adversaries, pouring in upon them from every quarter, and daily gaining ground against them. To that cause alone I impute their present silence; but, while I regret that the subject has not fallen into abler hands, I shall endeavour to discharge my duty, by imparting the danger that threatens them from a plan now in agitation amongst the higher powers, which may possibly have been artfully withheld from the knowledge, or accidentally escaped the observation of many, being partially circulated amongst a few individuals, though fraught with present mischief and final destruction to the whole community.

As it is by no means my intention to swell out a pamphlet with a view to profit, I shall state my objections to the

two



two letters in question as concisely as possible; not launching out into desultory arguments foreign to the purpose, but expressing my meaning in a few plain words, so open to every capacity, that "they may run who read," so concise, that they who read may retain. Having first considered the general tendency and avowed object of the letters, I shall afterwards proceed to enlarge upon the whole, and state my objections to, or approbation of each paragraph; for, though I fear there will be much to condemn, my mite of praise shall not be withheld from any part of the plan proposed, that can be considered of, the smallest benefit to the clergy or laity.

THE professed intention of the writer of the letters \* is to effect a wonderful reform in the established clergy of this

\* For the sake of brevity I shall distinguish him throughout this pamphlet by the title of the Reformer.

kingdom

kingdom by various methods; such as residence, fines, legal process, reduction of income, &c. Before we examine the efficacy of the remedies proposed, let us determine whether any reform is at all necessary, or whether the attempt to effect it would not be inexpedient and unsafe in every respect.

If complaints have been exhibited before the respective diocessans, from time to time, or at any time, against the clergy throughout the kingdom at large, either upon the ground of non-residence of the ministers, neglect of duty in themselves or in those deputed to officiate for them, or of a scarcity of pastors in general to answer the purposes of their profession, by instructing the people in the principles of religion and morality, and enforcing their admonitions by their own personal examples: If the bishops have been found incompetent to correct those evils, and in consequence of their inability

bility to enforce their own commands, application has been made to the metropolitans on the same grounds: If the metropolitans have also acknowledged themselves incapable of executing the ecclesiastical laws, and reforming the errors of the clergy within their respective limitations, and further applications have been made to the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council for the same purpose, and the evils have still continued unremedied; in that case alone I should judge an entire reform to be necessary in that branch of the constitution, from the apparent incapacity of the different heads to keep the members in order; and the most natural and legal steps to be pursued, to effect that reform, would be by petitioning the King that he would order a revision to be made of the ecclesiastical laws, that they might be rendered effectual to obviate the difficulties that have occurred.

BUT

BUT when no complaints have been exhibited to the Bishops, the Metropolitans, the Lord Lieutenant or Privy Council against the clergy in general upon any of the grounds above-mentioned ; when no incompetence has been found in those to whom the ecclesiastical authority is entrusted ; when the clergy are evidently rising in the esteem of all ranks of men, and are actually in a state of perfect peace and tranquillity \*. Is this the moment for a Reformer to start up, to degrade the episcopal jurisdiction ; to erect a star-chamber of enquiries, fines and punishments ; to reduce the members of the

\* The late disturbances in a part of the South of Ireland can never be considered for one moment as a reason for a general reform, because they are well known not to have originated from the misconduct, and still less from the non-residence, of the beneficed clergy ; and from whatever cause they did proceed, they are no longer existing, by the confession of the Reformer himself, who particularly declares that he chuses this period of internal quiet to bring forward his plan of reform.

established



established church to the same level with the Roman Catholic priests and dissenters, and to lower their incomes to the beggarly stipend of 80l. per annum?

Non tui auxilio ne defensoribus istis  
Tempus æget.

IF a reform is not necessary, it is inexpedient and unsafe to attempt it, because it is always dangerous to introduce into any part of this constitution, particularly the church, innovations which are not immediately necessary: But granting that it would be expedient to attempt a reform throughout the clergy of Ireland, let us enquire whether the remedy proposed in those letters will produce the intended effect. The sole object of the Reformer in his first letter is to compel the beneficed clergymen to residence “ for the security (as he alledges) of the “ church of Ireland;” and it is enforced by a declaration, “ that the Lord Lieu-  
“ tenant



“ tenant will not grant to any beneficed  
 “ clergyman any license for going into  
 “ foreign parts, except where it shall be  
 “ stated to be necessary for the recovery  
 “ of his health.” Let us for a moment  
 suppose that power assumed by his Ex-  
 cellency to be exercised in its full extent,  
 though no canon or statute law was ever  
 devised to wrest the authority from the  
 Episcopal jurisdiction, and to place it in  
 the hands of a Chief Governor for the  
 advantage of his Secretary \*. He waves  
 his

\* The statute of Queen Elizabeth, upon which the  
 Reformer relies for the exercise of the authority he  
 usurps, was framed in those turbulent times when  
 it was necessary to prevent the interference of a  
 foreign power in ecclesiastical affairs. It enables the  
 King or his Deputy to enquire into and correct he-  
 resies, schisms, irregularities and abuses in the church;  
 but the meaning of the statute cannot be so tortured  
 as to imply a power to grant pecuniary licenses for  
 absence, to invade all right of patronage, to reduce  
 the property of the clergy, and to overturn the cle-  
 rical establishment. Upon the revision of that act,

his magic wand, and a total change takes place. The young and healthy curates, who have regularly discharged their duty to the satisfaction of the flocks entrusted to their charge, and with a view to their own future advancement in the profession for which they were educated, are turned adrift; the old and infirm rectors hobble back to their respective parishes, to linger through a few miserable years, deprived of the comforts they have hitherto enjoyed from the kindness, and I may add, the discretion of their bishops: And how does this change operate to the security of the church? What advantage do the people derive from it? May they not receive as much information and personal attention from a curate as from a beneficed clergyman? A title adds nothing to a man's abilities. Though I am very far from  
being

it is not to be doubted but a house of parliament would make a wide difference between the days of Queen Elizabeth and George the Third.

being an advocate against residence, wherever it can be performed without the greatest inconvenience to the beneficed clergy, who are certainly under obligations to discharge their sacred functions strictly and conscientiously ; nor do I by any means approve of a wanton secession from their parishes, merely to answer the purposes of local convenience or pursuits of pleasure ; yet there are many instances where a strict residence would be attended with innumerable difficulties, and the parochial duties might be as properly discharged by a deputy, as by the principal ; and as this is a matter of more immediate concern to the conscience of the rector, than to the particular advantage of the people, I argue against the necessity of introducing violent measures and unnatural interference to enforce a general residence, which would neither make the people more enlightened, or the church more secure.

THE

THE first letter having no other object in view except the residence of the beneficed clergymen, I have only offered a few objections to the idea in general, leaving a more minute investigation to be entered upon in the course of my enquiry into the plan proposed in the second letter, which I shall now begin to examine paragraph by paragraph.

THE first paragraph opens with a declaration \*, “ that the Reformer is under  
 “ a necessity of troubling the Archbishop  
 “ of Dublin, in the absence of the Pri-  
 “ mate, with a communication of his  
 “ plan, which he is sure will be opened  
 “ to the Right Reverend Bench, with  
 “ particular advantages through the chan-  
 “ nel of his Grace’s weight and autho-  
 “ rity.”

THIS

\* The passages inserted between the “ inverted commas,” are quotations from the two letters in question, which it is to be hoped the Reformer will publish for the perusal of the clergy.



THIS exordium needs but little comment, for it cannot fail to strike my reverend brethren as a very singular circumstance, and perhaps to create suspicion in the minds of many, that a scheme so extraordinary in itself, and of such moment to the clergy at large, as that of a total change in the clerical establishment, should be proposed or even projected in the absence of the Primate. Are we so corrupt a body, so lost to all sense of duty and gratitude, that a prelate of the most exalted character for abilities in his profession, and integrity in his conduct, who as spiritual head of the church has a right to controul our actions and claim an interest in our hearts, cannot be entrusted with the rod of correction, but it must be placed in the hands of one, to whom three at least out of the four provinces owe no obedience, and in whom they place no confidence? But it is not only in the absence of the Primate this great subject

is



is to be agitated, I may almost call it in the absence of the whole bench; for it was brought forward at a time when the bishops were retired to their respective dioceses\*, at too great a distance to consult with each other, and communicate their sentiments with that freedom which the importance of the subject demands.

THE field was open to the Reformer himself and his spiritual counsellor. Far be it from me to point out the particular object of each man's ambition; but the view of gratifying the immediate wish of the soul will often dazzle the imagination, and sometimes direct the opinion of a man, without seeming to affect his heart.

THE

\* The letters were only read over in a cursory manner to a few of the bishops in the palace of Dublin on the 10th of April, and not till many weeks afterwards were copies forwarded to them in the country for their further inspection.

THE second paragraph sets forth, " that  
 " the Reformer regrets his very limited  
 " information upon many points, which  
 " should be fully investigated before he  
 " could hope to form a proper judgment  
 " either of the extent of the question,  
 " or of the remedies (if necessary) which  
 " can be applied under existing laws."  
 After this avowal of the necessity there  
 is for the fullest information, and his  
 own want of it, as well as his doubt  
 whether any remedies are necessary or  
 not, he proceeds, uninformed as he is,  
 to issue his fiat, to enforce residence, and  
 to prohibit every beneficed clergyman  
 from leaving the kingdom without a  
 license, and of course a fee to a secre-  
 tary, contrary to all canon and statute  
 law.

IN the next place, he reminds the  
 King's servants (whoever they are) of  
 their duty, in assisting " to extend the  
 " blessings of the church of Ireland, and  
 " secure

“ secure to the ministers of the gospel  
 “ that provision, which may enable them  
 “ to dispense their precepts to the best  
 “ advantage, for the interest of religion.”

THE *security* of that provision will be  
 seen hereafter to consist in *reducing* their  
 incomes to an annual stipend of 80*l.* or  
 90*l.*

“ HE is happy too, that this subject  
 “ should be brought forward at a period  
 “ of internal quiet, and external secu-  
 “ rity.”

THAT is, when all is peace at home,  
 and no disturbances exist abroad, to take  
 off the attention of the people from do-  
 mestic evils, he is happy in laying open a  
 field of murmurs and discontents against  
 the church, by unsettling the minds of  
 the parishioners, by pointing out and com-  
 pelling them to see a misconduct in their  
 pastors, which had hitherto escaped their

B

notice,

notice, and persuading them to press for a reform, where they knew of nothing wrong.

He then proceeds to touch upon the late disturbances, and says, "He will not enquire into the causes of them," but at once determines them to have arisen "from the little influence the clergy possessed over the minds and inclinations of their flocks."

THIS opinion immediately changes, for in the following sentence he declares, "He is not inclined to give credit to the calumnies personally levelled at the clergy, but is obliged to look for other causes of the weakness that left them unprotected from the insurgents."

THEN again—"He is not blind to other considerations which occur to him, yet undoubtedly much of it originated in the great disproportion in numbers between



“ between the clergy and the flocks en-  
 “ trusted to them.”

WHATEVER the result may be in his own mind, of that jumble of opinions, the inference he draws from it is this—  
 “ That the security of the church would  
 “ be materially strengthened by encreas-  
 “ ing the number of its pastors.”

To this I answer—with respect to the disturbances alluded to, they were never imputed by either party to any other cause, but on the one side, to the disinclination of the lower class of people in that part of the kingdom, and those Roman Catholics, to pay any tythe at all; and on the other side, to the supposed excesses attempted in the exaction of tythe; but in no instance to the scarcity or non-residence of beneficed clergymen. How then would the remedy proposed apply to the disease?—Were the number of pastors to be encreased, would those rebellious spirits be more inclined to pay



their tythe to a variety of pastors than to one? for the same quantity of tythe would still remain to be paid, and consequently the same grievance, or possibly much greater, would attend the collecting them. Would ten beneficed clergymen be less obnoxious to the flocks of a different communion than one?—or will they be less inclined to enforce the payment of their dues, when their incomes will be so diminished, that punctuality in payment will be the only means of keeping them from starving upon their preferments? As the residence of beneficed clergymen is so much relied upon to obviate the difficulties under which they labour, let me here enquire whether the resident pastors were less affected by those disturbances either in their persons or properties? were they less open to the attacks of the insurgents, or had their precepts and personal examples any other influence than to render them more immediate objects of vengeance to the dissatisfied,

satisfied, and victims to their own fancied security?

THE preceding arguments of the Reformer may be considered only as a prelude to the grand object he has in view, which is nothing less than the maxim of Scotch politics so much adopted in these present times—"Devide & Impera," to to destroy the whole fabrick of the Protestant church, by dividing the present unions into distinct parishes, which cannot possibly be attended by any other consequence than that of lowering the incomes of the beneficed clergy, and thereby rendering them less respectable and more insignificant in the eyes of their flocks. "This," says he, (speaking of the increase of pastors) "leads me to the  
 " consideration of one part of the constitution of the church, which I am persuaded your Grace will agree with me  
 " in lamenting.—I mean the practice of  
 " uniting upon the head of one pastor,  
 " those

“ those variety of cures, which either by  
 “ unions of different descriptions now  
 “ admitted by law, or by faculties unlim-  
 “ ited in extent, may now legally be  
 “ crowded on the head of one man.”

As the third paragraph is only a continuation of the same, I shall answer to the whole at once. He goes on thus:—

“ MANY excuses might have been  
 “ drawn for this practice and establishment, from the situation of this country at the moment in which this system took place; the very confined number of the population, the depressed state of the agriculture, the national poverty, the uncertain state of the religion itself, the scarcity of ministers, originating not only from these considerations, but from the want of clerical education sufficient for the supply of the church—all these causes suggested those points of practice in which our  
 “ ecclesi-

“ecclesiastical establishment differs so  
 “widely from that of England.”  
 “WHATEVER the original causes were  
 “of crowding several parishes upon  
 “the head of one man,” as it is ele-  
 gantly expressed, there is every reason to  
 suppose the same causes in general are  
 still prevailing, because many unions  
 have been made of late years, and be-  
 cause the Privy Council, in concurrence  
 with the diocesan, have ever been in-  
 vested with the power of dissolving as  
 well as uniting the different parishes,  
 where it has been found requisite, and  
 they have frequently and discretionally  
 exercised that power.

BUT to enter more minutely into the  
 causes of so many unions, “the very  
 “confined number of the population,  
 “the depressed state of the agriculture,  
 “and the national poverty,” as they all  
 signify nearly the same thing, and tend  
 to



to the same effect, I may venture to "crowd them, as a union, upon one head." They operate with respect to the protestant clergy in almost as full force as they did at the first beginning of unions. The encrease of the population has added very little to the protestant inhabitants of the united parishes. In some of the provinces, I can answer for that particularly wherein I have the honour to reside, there are many parishes, and those of long established unions, that do not at this time furnish ten protestant inhabitants—some still fewer—scarce one in a whole province that would afford a congregation for two churches, were the unions to be dissolved and a separate pastor appointed for each division. With respect to the few that are of larger extent and more numerous population, wherever the circumstances of the parishes have made it at all advisable to disunite them, it has been done already, as I observed before, by act of council,



council, which plainly proves the interference of a new power to be at least unnecessary. I presume the Reformer alludes to the provision of the clergy, when he speaks of the depressed state of agriculture, and the national poverty. It is within a very short term of years that the agriculture or wealth of the country has encreased to any degree beyond the reach of the capital; but the information of the Reformer must be very limited indeed if he conceives that the incomes of the clergy have encreased in equal proportions with the population, agriculture or wealth of the nation. To enlarge upon this topic would lead me to discuss a point which already has employed so many able pens, and is so amply explained, that it would be presumptive as well as useless in me to enter again upon that beaten track. It is sufficiently clear to all demonstration, that the clergy do not receive their tythe as by right established; and the very attempt

tempt to ascertain that right is alledged by the late insurgents as the groundwork of all the disturbances. The tythe is so divided between the laity and clergy—so many modusses are established—some articles are tytheable in one province, and some in another—many of the clergy have scarce any tythe at all, and others no glebe; so that the incomes evidently do not rise in proportion to the wealth of the kingdom; and therefore the argument of increase according to the national prosperity could never hold good in general, however it might affect a few individuals.

THE next cause of the unions, which he supposes no longer exist, is “the uncertain state of the religion itself.” To this a very short answer will be sufficient. If the state of the religion is no longer uncertain or insecure, why this projected plan of innovations, specifically declared to be intended only for the

the advancement of religion and security of the church? It will require but a moderate share of common sense to convince an impartial protestant that the established religion is by no means in a state of security. Without casting invidious reflections on any body of men or any religion, I may be permitted to observe, that no religion can be called certain or secure which has to contend with others more powerful than itself. The Roman Catholics are very far superior in numbers, and the dissenting Protestants are a very increasing and numerous sect; and I appeal to the understanding of every thinking man, whether the principle of reducing the established clergy to the same level with those of other communions, can possibly operate to the advancement of religion, and security of the church! Had they been found less respectable in their persons and properties, and less able to contend with their enemies in the time of those disturbances,

disturbances, the blow then meditating would have fallen effectually upon them, and left no materials at this time for a Reformer to work upon.

THE same objection against reducing the incomes by dissolving the unions will extend also to his next argument of "the scarcity of ministers, from the want of clerical education sufficient for the supply of the church." It is to the honour of the established church, that the members of it in general, wherever situated, are entitled to respect from their parishioners, from their birth, families, and connections in life, as well as from the particular education they have received in order to qualify them for the exercise of their profession. Many younger sons of the first families in this as well as our sister kingdom are constantly educated for the church, because the present provision allotted them makes it worth their while to engage in the clerical

clerical profession. Many too amongst the lower orders of men have scraped together their little all to educate a son for that profession where preferment is open to all ranks—where bishops and archbishops may rise from the plough and the dunghill. But when the incomes of the clergy shall be reduced, the education must be more confined ; because it cannot answer to any description of men to bestow a liberal and expensive education upon their children for a profession that would scarce afford a pittance equal to that of a common mechanic.

“ ALL these causes, (says the Reformer,) suggested those points of practice in which our ecclesiastical establishment differs so widely from that of England.” The wide difference in the practice is exactly this : that in many instances in England much greater and more numerous preferments have been  
and



and are still "crowded on the head of  
 "one man." He afterwards allows that  
 it is *not* the practice of this country,  
 the Primate having laid down a law  
 for himself not to extend the faculties,  
 which law he wishes should be made  
 binding to his successors. Whenever  
 a future Primate shall be found attempt-  
 ing to abuse the power which the law  
 has given him, it will be time enough to  
 wrest it from him.

"I NEED not expatiate upon this  
 "point, (says he,) because your Grace  
 "and your very reverend brethren *uni-*  
 "*formly* agree in stating this as one of  
 "the serious difficulties which operate  
 "most unfavourably for the extension,  
 "security and character of our church."  
 The expression might have been more  
 "correct, had he said "your Grace and  
 "two or three of your brethren agree."

HE

He has before lamented the absence of the Primate, and the want of his opinion, and there are many others of the bench in the same predicament; very few indeed have been properly consulted, or have given in their sentiments upon the subject after mature consideration; and I flatter myself some advocates will yet be found among so many able and disinterested prelates to protect that church, of which they are the ornaments and chief support!

IN the fourth paragraph, the delicacy of the Reformer appears in a most conspicuous light: After all the arguments he has used against the clergy, and the compliments paid to the heads, "If I  
 " now proceed, (says he,) to touch upon  
 " another subject, it is with caution  
 " and difficulty, lest I should wound in  
 " the slightest degree the feelings of  
 " those whom I truly respect and honour."  
 "He then proceeds instantly to  
 pass

pass indiscriminate censure upon the whole bench of bishops, for neglect of their duty in suffering the ministers “ to  
 “ absent themselves from their flocks  
 “ without any canonical reasons for their  
 “ absence, and in many instances contrary to the admonition and legal process, and certainly *in all* contrary to  
 “ the precept and example of their  
 “ bishop.” I hope his Grace and all his reverend brethren have uniformly agreed with him in that point !

THE fifth paragraph treats again of the partial disturbances in the South, and the remedies used by Parliament to suppress them ; and the Reformer adds,  
 “ it is the duty of government to assist  
 “ the clergy in the attempt which they  
 “ have so laudably made to conciliate  
 “ the affections of their parishioners, by  
 “ endeavouring to remove the causes of  
 “ discontent, many of which originate  
 “ in the establishment, and not in the  
 “ conduct of the pastor.”

HERE

HERE then the plot begins to open upon us ; it is not the conduct of the clergy that requires a reform, but the establishment itself ; and the next paragraph proposes the plan to effect that reform, viz. “ To plant in every parish  
 “ which can supply a competent establishment that most valuable of all  
 “ characters a resident parochial minister,  
 “ who, whilst he enforces the precepts  
 “ of the Gospel, might conciliate as a  
 “ friend and common parent to all, the  
 “ affections of his flock.” To this object he invites the attention and concurrence of the reverend prelates.

EVERY parish that can supply a competent establishment has already or might have a resident parochial minister, and whenever that character is wanting, it must be with the consent, or by the neglect of the diocesan ; except, indeed, in the case of those obstinate and rebellious pastors he mentions, who have re-

C

fused

fused to obey precept, example and legal process. But the character he proposes to establish is not merely a resident minister, it is one who is to be held in such esteem in the eyes of his flock that he is to be considered as a friend and common parent by all. Let us see how he is to be enabled to attain this most valuable of all characters; by reducing his income to such a degree as to preclude him from the means of associating with the respectable part of his parish, and compelling him to sequester himself from all connection with his flock, or to herd only with the most inferior class, and preach morality in the whiskey shop. Thus, the evil so much insisted upon, of the non-residence of beneficed clergymen, and the duty being performed by those of a lower degree, would in effect extend through the whole establishment; for every pastor would then be in the same humble situation, so degraded in the estimation



estimation of his parishioners as to deprive them of one principal advantage proposed to them by his residence, the personal influence and parental affection he might possess by a friendly and social intercourse with them.

THE seventh paragraph treats of the mode of reducing the clerical establishment, by dissolving the unions of every description, parochial and prebendal \*, wherever the separate divisions would afford what the Reformer conceives to be a *competent* income for each minister. Though he does not propose to interrupt the pos-

\* The dissolution of Episcopal unions will follow of course ; for the ultimate view of the Reformer being evidently to strengthen the hands of government, by diminishing all other patronage, to increase the number of bishops, and at the same time to weaken their authority, and render them absolutely dependent upon government, will effectually contribute to accomplish that end.

session of the present incumbents, yet he advises " to separate the unions in law, " and whenever opportunities occurred of " building a church, to compel the incumbent to provide a curate." This idea of leaving the present incumbents apparently unaffected by that part of the reform is a lure thrown out to engage their concurrence with a plan, which is supposed not only to leave their possessions undisturbed, but even to give their present establishments security. It is artfully calculated to lull that passion which is apt to operate most powerfully in the human breast, self-interest. Though I trust that very few of my reverend brethren could ever be influenced by such an unworthy motive, in a matter where the interest of the whole community is so immediately concerned, yet to prevent those few from being blinded by that unhappy prejudice, I shall endeavour to convince them that the present incumbents

incumbents are likely to be disturbed in their possessions by the plan proposed, and that it is clearly intended to invade the property of the present clergy, as well as their successors. For by such a law a minister now possessed of two or more unions of different denominations, if by any means a church could be built in each parish, would be compelled to pay 50*l.* per annum to a curate for each parish, so that he would be the nominal proprietor of all the parishes, while the curate possessed his income. But the difficulty still remains of building so many churches as would be necessary on this occasion, of which the Reformer does not seem to be aware, and for which he has made no provision. Let him cast his eye over the kingdom at large, and see how many parishes, and those of unions, are unprovided with any church; how many churches are actually in ruins, and how few are in a proper  
state

state for the performance of that worship for which they were consecrated. He will find all this arising from the poverty of those parishes, united as they are, and their inability to raise a cess equal to the necessary annual repairs of a church; to build, consequently, would be still more impracticable, and if built, from whence shall the fund arise to preserve them from ruin? He must take 50l. more from the incumbent to keep them in repair, and the next step will be to take 50l. more to purchase a congregation to fill them; for, as I observed before, there are not Protestant inhabitants enough in this kingdom to supply larger congregations than the present number of churches can accommodate, and country churches are not apt to overflow like the theatres. It will be time enough then to increase the number of the ministers when churches are built for them, and congregations

gregations provided for those churches; by that time probably the present race of incumbents may be extinct, and another generation may succeed differently educated, and with less aspiring hopes, content to exercise the office of a pastor with the stipend of a mechanic. The reduction of income, by encouraging celibacy, would remove that great and honourable distinction which now subsists between the Protestant and Roman Catholic church, the privilege given to ministers of entering into the married state; for it is an absurdity to suppose that a minister, upon a living of 80l. or even 160l. per annum, could possibly keep his house in repair, and support a wife and family, in such a manner as to maintain the valuable character and the influence he ought to possess in his parish.

THE



THE eighth paragraph contradicts the second, respecting the limitation of faculties, for the Reformer now proposes to allow two livings to be crowded on the head of one pastor, and that at the distance of fifty Irish miles. Is this the result of all his wise regulations and projected plans for the residence of the clergy, which he has hitherto declared to be so essentially necessary for the security of the church, and the service of religion? A clergyman possessed of two parishes at the distance of fifty or only fifteen Irish miles cannot possibly perform the necessary duties of both in his own person; he may reside at each alternately, but during his residence in one parish the other must be served by a curate, so that each parish would be attended by a resident rector only half the year; and if the parochial duty can be properly performed by a curate for half a year, it may for one, two, or any term

term of years. By this proposal, therefore, the Reformer unavoidably admits that the residence of beneficed clergy, upon which he laid so great a stress, is *not* necessary ; at the same time he admits that a reform is also unnecessary in that respect, as he only proposes to abide by the mode now established in this country, viz. to allow two livings, and no more, to be held by one pastor.

THE ninth paragraph opens with an extraordinary declaration, of his wish “ to  
 “ leave the power, jurisdiction, and au-  
 “ thority of the diocesan as complete as  
 “ words can leave it.” But he is desirous  
 of “ restoring the principle of statute law,  
 “ to enforce residence by a pecuniary mulct,  
 “ recoverable by short process in our courts  
 “ of law. He would not subject the  
 “ clergy to the same unlimited system of  
 “ information as in England, but proposes  
 “ that the board of First Fruits should  
 “ *alone*

“ *alone* have the power of prosecuting for  
 “ these penalties, reserving only to the  
 “ Attorney General the claim of prosecuting on behalf and in the name of  
 “ the crown.”

WHAT is now become of the *complete* power, jurisdiction, and authority of the diocesan? nominal indeed, and left to them in words, but in reality transferred to the board of First Fruits and the Attorney General!—The absurdity of the first idea is too evident; for the board of First Fruits very rarely meet except upon extraordinary occasions, and having no emoluments arising to them as a body, of course would not be easily induced to increase their trouble by such frequent meetings as would be absolutely necessary were this plan of reform to be carried into execution; and when met, they are chiefly composed of those very diocesans who are resident in their diocese at least one half

half of each year, and who by this transfer of their jurisdiction to that board are by the Reformer himself deemed incompetent to enforce the ecclesiastical laws. An Attorney General is certainly more accessible than the board of First Fruits; but however disinterested the possessors of that employment may be found in this age of public spirit, if in some future degenerate times any should arise so influenced by mercenary views as to open a shop of indulgences, to raise emoluments to themselves from the infirmities or neglect of the clergy, the evil would be endless; for by limiting the system of information, as the Reformer proposes, though he points out no other method, yet it is evidently left in the power of an Attorney General to search for information, in order to harass the clergy with prosecutions and penalties for non-residence.

Not



Nor content with this plan of destroying the episcopal power, he invidiously attempts to extract from the bench of bishops an answer to these letters, either signing their own abdication, or denying their subjection to a superior power.

To obviate the objections to residence, where there is no glebe in the parish, he proposes to "*compel* the sale of land for  
 " the purpose of purchasing glebe,"—and  
 adds, " by resting in the funds any sum  
 " which his majesty might be advised  
 " annually to give for this purpose, and  
 " allotting it unalienably with compound  
 " interest to such livings as the board of  
 " First Fruits might direct, I am per-  
 " suaded that in the course of a few  
 " years those proprietors whom the funds  
 " now applicable for this purpose can-  
 " not tempt to sell, will be induced,  
 " by the increased value of the purchase  
 " money, to convey a small glebe, for  
 " which

“ which the living should pay a confide-  
 “ ration to the board, in order that these  
 “ funds might constantly increase in those  
 “ parishes where the same difficulties  
 “ exist; and where the crown has land-  
 “ property, an enquiry may be made into  
 “ the state of the leases, in order that  
 “ every assistance may be given to so  
 “ material an object.”

ALL the foregoing system is evidently  
 founded upon conjecture; for it is by no  
 means certain, that wherever a glebe may  
 be wanted, the proprietors of land will be  
 tempted to part with it for the confide-  
 ration of an advanced price; and there is  
 every reason to suppose that in a few  
 years the purchase of land will be much  
 higher than it is at present, from the an-  
 nual increase of its value. There is cer-  
 tainly a large proportion of land in pos-  
 session of the crown; and if his majesty  
 is as zealous for an alteration in the cle-  
 rical

rical establishment as he is represented by  
 the Reformer, it is to be presumed his  
 liberality in the disposal of his grants will  
 second his own wishes ; but I believe it  
 will be found, upon enquiry, that there is  
 very little crown lands so fortunately situated  
 in each parish as to become an eligible  
 spot for the site of a church, or the residence  
 of a minister. To fulfil the intention of the  
 Reformer, and his idea of that  
 strict residence which is to spread its salutary  
 influence all over the kingdom, every  
 church should be built, and every minister  
 resident, in the centre of his parish. For  
 where a parish extends many miles in  
 length, (which is frequently the case in  
 this kingdom) the situation of the church,  
 or the habitation of the clergyman at either  
 extremity, would as effectually defeat the  
 purposes of actual residence, with respect  
 to the distant part of the parishioners,  
 as if they had neither church nor minister,

nister, and were supplied with the use of both from a neighbouring parish.

THERE is a stronger objection to the purchase of land from the subject, even if it could be compelled, and that is, the uncertainty of the tenure. As this has been so often alledged against the commutation of tythe for land, I need not enlarge upon it, but content myself with observing, that it would be attended with great inconvenience and danger to the minister to subject him to the risk of a disputed title some years after his church and house may have been built, upon land so purchased; and, from the various changes property has undergone in this kingdom, the titles are so frequently defective that it is to be feared they would not bear the nice investigation which would be absolutely necessary in this case for the security of the church.

HIS

His next proposal I approve in part, so far as it meets the idea suggested to him by a reverend prelate. He says, "With  
 " respect to the livings which shall be va-  
 " cated and disunited, it might be eligi-  
 " ble that the profits of such of them  
 " as have no parish church or house  
 " should be wholly sequestered by the  
 " board for the first two years, in order  
 " to enable that corporation to build a  
 " proper house for the residence of the  
 " minister."

WITHOUT dissolving the present unions, it might be eligible, that, upon the vacancy of any preferment, a power should be given to the diocesan (who from his situation in the diocese is more equal to the trust than the board of First Fruits) to appoint a minister with the salary of a curate for two years, setting apart the remainder of the profits for the building a proper house for his future residence, under



der his own inspection, and with the approbation of the diocesan ; whose successors should also be bound to fulfil that appointment at the expiration of two years, by inducting the appointed minister to the living, in possession of its full profits ; but that he should not be denied the liberty of resigning that living in case a more eligible preferment should offer itself before the expiration of the two years, and that, till that period, he should continue in possession of his former preferments, whatever they might be. This appears to me an easy method of increasing the number of glebe houses, without reducing the present incomes of the clergy, or injuring any individual, as the acceptance or refusal of a living so circumstanced would be entirely in his own choice.

His next proposal is to increase that fund, “ by a more easy and certain process  
 “ for the collection of First Fruits, and  
 “ also by the penalties above stated for

D

“ non-

“ non-residence,” which penalties he fixes  
 “ at the rate of two shillings in the pound  
 “ for absence above forty days in six  
 “ months.”

THAT the payment of the First Fruits is not so regular as it ought to be I cannot deny; but much of that irregularity arises more from the neglect of the collector than wilful backwardness in the clergy. According to the present mode of collecting the First Fruits, a clergyman beneficed in the remotest part of the kingdom must find out whether his preferment is subject to that payment, for many livings, and those of great value, are not liable to it; then he must learn the exact sum, which he is not permitted to discharge at once, but must enter into security, and two others with him, to pay the demand by installments. I submit it to the consideration of my reverend brethren, whether it would not be an easier mode of collecting the First Fruits to empower the register

gister of each diocese to collect them, who cannot, *ex officio*, be ignorant when a new presentation is made out to any preferment. He might return an account to the minister of the sum due upon it, and receive it from him by instalments at each ensuing visitation. In this case no excuse would be left for want of punctuality in the clergy, who would be duly apprized of the nature and time of payment ; nor can I foresee any objection to this easy manner of collecting, to which all other methods would not be equally liable ; for in case of wilful neglect or refusal, all must be finally determined in the same way, by legal process.

WITH regard to the penalty proposed for non-residence, I cannot avoid expressing my astonishment, that a Reformer, so zealous for the strict residence of the beneficed clergy, and so convinced that the security of the church depends entirely upon it, should now hold forth a

temptation to the clergy at large to allure them from their duty, and defeat the avowed object of his reform. At the easy rate of four shillings in the pound every minister is invited to wander from his flock, and pursue his pleasures in any part of the habitable globe. The penalty amounts exactly to a fifth part of the income, so that a clergyman giving up 100*l.* per annum out of a living of 500*l.* leaves himself in possession of a sinecure of 400*l.* per annum, with the liberty of enjoying it wherever his inclination leads him. I am so well acquainted with the mode of living in each country, particular in the clerical line, that I am bold to say a man may live more commodiously and reputably in England upon 400*l.* than he can upon 500*l.* in this country. It is easy then to see how far this penalty would operate most probably upon many of my reverend brethren of this kingdom, but certainly upon most Englishmen beneficed here, and their  
number



number is not very small, who are not attached to it by any particular ties, and whom the *Amor Patriæ* would naturally lead to prefer their native country. And this is the plan proposed to establish resident rectors in every parish instead of curates! It is proper to observe, that all the penalties above stated are finally to be settled by that legal process which he has before declared incompetent.

IN the tenth paragraph he says, " it  
 " would be expedient that we should  
 " first be accurately informed of the num-  
 " ber and value of the cathedral stalls  
 " and larger livings which would remain  
 " after the unions were separated in the  
 " manner above proposed, as matter of  
 " fair and honourable ambition to the  
 " clergy ; for I certainly would not wish  
 " that the church should be deprived of  
 " the means of engaging in the profes-  
 " sion those who from their abilities,  
 " influence or connections, might contri-  
 " bute to its support."

If



IF the former explanations of the intended plan of reform have appeared replete with contradiction, and incomprehensible, this plunges deeper in obscurity; it is "confusion worse confounded," *absurdum per absurdius*! After the separation of all the unions now subsisting there would certainly remain some livings of great value in themselves, unconnected with cathedral stalls, and unassisted by any additional emoluments. Those livings the Reformer proposes as matter of fair and honourable ambition, to induce men of abilities, influence and connections, to engage in the church. It does not follow that men of that description will necessarily be possessed of those great preferments, as that must ever depend entirely upon the will of the patron. Merit has not always proved the road to preferments. Some men possessed of abilities, without influence or connections, have obtained those great rewards; and others again, without any  
of

of those qualifications, from a pliancy of disposition, and an accommodating turn of mind, have raised themselves to the first posts of honour and profit in the clerical profession. But let us suppose his wish accomplished, the unions destroyed, the large preferments occupied by men of abilities, influence and connections, and the rest an undistinguished herd, of no abilities, influence or connections, reduced to the poor pittance of 80l. or perhaps 160l. per annum. Thus the private ambition of a few lucky individuals would be amply gratified; but what benefit would the clergy at large or the laity derive from this change? The vast disproportion in the preferments would only tend to degrade those of such inferior incomes in the eyes of their flocks, without contributing to the support of the profession or the advancement of religion. Of what use would it be to the community at large of protestant flocks dispersed throughout the kingdom,

dom, that a small number of parishes in one or two of the provinces were supplied by men of abilities, influence and connections? If men of that description are conducive to the interest of religion in one part of the kingdom, they are equally necessary in all; and every parish has an equal claim to ministers so qualified. According to the present establishment, the parishes in general are much better supplied than they could be by this system; and that very partial disproportion, which would then prevail, does not operate now to the disadvantage of the clergy or laity.

He adds—" it will be material to  
 " know the number of united livings  
 " which would admit of separation, leaving  
 " ing to the different incumbents a stipend of 160l. or 200l. per annum. At  
 " the same time I would wish to consider  
 " how far a certain number of small  
 " livings of 80l. or 90l. per annum may  
 " contribute here as they do in England  
 " to

“ to a constant and regular supply of  
 “ clergy for the ministry.”

THE intention then is to confine the incomes of the clergy in general (those larger livings excepted that would remain after the separation of the unions) to 160l. or 200l. per annum, or else to 80l. or 90l. per annum. It seems doubtful to which stipend the Reformer most inclines, but I should suppose, from the levelling principle that predominates through all his system, he would prefer the smaller income. For it could answer no end to establish two degrees of preferment, both so poor and pitiful as not to afford a decent maintenance for any clergyman, much less a competent one for that valuable character, a resident parochial minister, who is to conciliate as a friend and common parent to all, the affections of his flock; unless he means the smaller living of 80l. or 90l. per annum as a gradation, to prepare the incumbent for the chance of succeeding hereafter to the  
 immense



immense income of 160l. per annum. To effect that he must take all patronage out of the hands of the present proprietors, and vest it in himself or the board of First Fruits, with a power of bestowing the larger preferments as they fall upon those only who have possessed the small ones ; otherwise his intention would still be constantly defeated by the disposal of preferment, depending, as it now does, entirely upon the will of the patron. This leads me to mention another great inconvenience, and indeed a flagrant injustice, that would necessarily accompany that part of his reform, which respects the dissolving the unions, and reducing the value of livings—I mean the unwarrantable invasion of the property of the crown, as well as of all his Majesty's subjects in whom the patronage or right of presentation to preferments is now by law established.

THE idea of “ a certain number of  
 “ small livings contributing here, as they  
 “ do



“ do in England, to a constant and regular supply of clergy,” seems to imply that there are in England a number of small livings set apart for that purpose, which is not the fact.

IN the very extensive scale of English preferments there are many livings of every description, large as well as small; but those of inferior value do not owe their inferiority to design in the legislature, but to mere local and accidental causes, being so circumstanced from their peculiar situations as not to have encreased in their value in proportion with the rest. A very judicious and learned English prelate, seeing so much inconvenience arising to the clergy *from the number of small livings*, introduced a bill into the House of Lords a few years ago, *not to reduce*, but to raise all their incomes to a certain value, which was deemed a competent maintenance for gentlemen of that profession. This bill, though founded upon motives of kindness, and evidently calculated

culated to benefit the majority of the clergy of England, was rejected upon account of the danger that might arise to the state from any innovations in that great branch of it, the church.

THE eleventh and last paragraph treats of the parochial and endowed schools, which it seems to be his intention to place upon a proper and respectable footing. I agree entirely with the Reformer upon that subject, being convinced that there have been and still are existing shameful abuses, and waste of the vast tracts of lands and other endowments granted for the purpose of establishing and supporting regular seminaries of education. It is not my business to expose individuals to censure; and as a committee has been appointed to enquire into those abuses, it would be improper in me to enter upon the subject 'till the issue of that enquiry is made public. But I cannot help expressing my hope that every information will be sought for and obtained by them  
that

that can lead to a thorough and impartial investigation of the matter before them.

BESIDES the two letters in question, a printed paper has been circulated through the channel of the diocesans, exactly similar to an order lately issued to the Benedictine monks in France, requiring an accurate account of their benefices, unions, situation and condition of church, house, glebe, &c. with the yearly value of their property. How far this request may have been complied with I cannot take upon me to say, but I know of no authority whatsoever in Great-Britain or Ireland that can compel a man to sign his name to any thing which may tend to criminate himself; which is clearly the object of that printed paper, and that by the most artful and effectual method, silence itself becoming a negative proof of guilt; for those who by any chance are non-resident in their diocese during the circulation of that paper,

paper, by their silence mark their own delinquency.

HAVING now gone through the entire system of reform as concisely as the nature of the subject would permit, endeavouring at the same time to render myself perfectly intelligible to my readers,

Ne dum brevis esse laboro,  
Obscurus fiam—

I shall sum up in a few words the various objections that have occurred. The mode of enforcing residence by pecuniary mulcts and legal process is not only unnecessary, the diocesans being already invested with sufficient authority over their clergy, but would most probably be attended with a contrary effect, and encourage the beneficed clergy to absent themselves from their duty. To reduce their incomes would certainly reduce their influence, and the degree of estimation in which they are now held by their flocks, without answering one  
good



good purpose. And neither the reduction of income, nor the enforcing of residence, could possibly obviate the grievances or check the disturbances in the South, as they would not save a sheaf of wheat nor an ear of barley to the insurgents, whose complaints are not founded upon the income or residence of the clergy, but on the payment of tithe.

By the whole system of reform the episcopal jurisdiction would be absolutely void; the patronage of the crown, the college, the bishop and the lay-patron invaded and reduced; the Protestant clergy, and with them the Protestant religion, would dwindle into contempt, and Christianity itself by degrees lose all its influence, till some new Reformer, infatuated with the same spirit of innovation, and actuated by the same zeal, shall start up in future days, and erect a pope upon the ruins of a Protestant vicar.

I NOW



I now take my leave of my reverend brethren, submitting these my sentiments to their serious consideration, sensible that I have omitted many powerful arguments that will naturally occur to those who consider this matter with that attention with which it deserves to be treated, as it was my design not to wear out, but slightly to touch upon the subject, in full assurance that this hint will be more amply followed by some abler pen; for I have no doubt, if the intended plan appears to them in the same unfavourable and dangerous light in which I have viewed it, that all my brethren, from the highest to the lowest order, will be unanimous in opposing an unnecessary, inadequate and unconstitutional reform.

*F I N I S.*